

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Snake River Basin
Fish and Wildlife Office
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News Release



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SERVICE TO CONDUCT 5-YEAR REVIEW OF BLISS RAPIDS SNAIL *Public Comment Period closes September 24, 2004*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today it is conducting a 5-year review of the Bliss Rapids snail (*Taylorconcha serpenticola*), as required under the Endangered Species Act. The snail occurs in isolated segments of the Idaho's Middle Snake River, as well as in several cold-water springs in Hagerman Valley, Idaho.

The Bliss Rapids snail was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act on December 14, 1992. The species requires free-flowing, cool water environments, but water quality where the snail is found continues to be adversely affected by one or more of the following: hydroelectric development, peak-loading effects from existing hydroelectric project operations, water pollution, competition with non-native species, and inadequate regulatory mechanisms. The Service published a recovery plan for five aquatic species, including the Bliss Rapids snail, in 1995.

The purpose of a 5-year review is to ensure that listed species have the appropriate level of protection under the Endangered Species Act. The 5-year review process will evaluate population data, factors affecting the species, and ongoing conservation measures. During the review process, the Bliss rapids snail will continue to receive full protection under the Act.

"More than ten years have passed since the Bliss Rapids snail entered into Federal protection, said Jeff Foss, Field Supervisor of the Service's Snake River Basin Fish and Wildlife Office. "New data regarding the species may be available to us, and we wish to use that new information to broaden the scope of scientific knowledge and ensure that the species is receiving appropriate protection under the Act."

If new information or analysis is acquired during the public comment period, the Service may find that a change in the snail's classification is warranted. Changes may include delisting, or a change in status from threatened to endangered (reclassification). If information the Service receives indicates that a classification change is warranted, a formal rule-making process would begin, including public review and comment, as defined in section 4(a) of the Act. No change in the status of the species may occur until that process is complete.

In order to allow the Service adequate time to consider information, submissions must be received no later than September 24, 2004. Information and comments may be submitted to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709. Comments may also be faxed to 208-378-5262, or e-mailed to fw1srbocomment@fws.gov. Please include "BRS 5-Yr Review"

in the title line for faxes and e-mails. Please submit electronic comments in an ASCII file format, and avoid the use of special characters and encryption. If our Internet connection is disrupted, please submit your comments by mail or fax from the contact office above. Information received in response to this notice, and review results, will be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at the above address.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 9 5million acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.